

An Open Letter
to my Fellow-members of
The Theosophical Society

LETTER NO. 4

APRIL 19th, 1939

DEAR BRETHREN,

In this Open Letter I want particularly to stress the application of our First Object, not merely to The Society as a whole, but to every individual member. We are establishing a nucleus of The Universal Brotherhood without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour. But it seems to me of the highest importance to realize, especially now, that we must endeavour to establish such a nucleus in our own individual selves. The Society must establish this nucleus, and because of this, it is imperative the Society should be composed of those who, accepting the three Objects, themselves desire ardently to embody the spirit of the first object.

Only will this nucleus of Universal Brotherhood flourish as each one of us has in him its qualities both living and projected. Needless to say, it is impossible

for any one of us perfectly to achieve the qualities of the nucleus. But at least we can strive after them, challenging our daily lives in all their details as to their conformity with the spirit of the First Object of The Society. Is there in each one of us a spirit of Brotherhood which rises above all distinctions of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour? Is each one of us an example in his surroundings of a life which rises above—shall I say transmutes,—all differences, welding them into a great solidarity?

Every member of The Theosophical Society, let we repeat, must be a great link, a deep channel, between the various divergencies which exist in his midst. He must be a very positively harmonizing activity—between the various sects of his faith, between the Theists and the Atheists and Agnostics, between the various political parties, between the various leaders of public opinion, between the young and the old, between the various partisans of various convictions.

He must, of course, have his own convictions. A particular aspect of his faith may well be especially dear to him. He may find it desirable to belong to one

political party or to another. But his own individual uniqueness must never prevent him from understanding the uniquenesses of others. His own particular approach to truth must never prevent him from appreciating what are in fact the approaches of others, however little these may seem to him to be approaches to truth at all.

Furthermore, he must learn to be an individual to whom people naturally bring their troubles. I think this is one of the greatest qualities a member of The Theosophical Society can achieve—that people in trouble naturally gravitate towards him for help, for consolation, for courage, for comradeship. In the Christian Faith the Lady Mary has the title of *Consolatrix Afflictorum*. We, of course, are not worthy even of a shadow of such a glorious appellation. But in our own small ways, being Theosophists, having at our disposal the wisdom of Theosophy, we must learn and practise the most gracious science of consoling those who are in a state of affliction. One of the acid tests of the real worth of a Theosophist is the capacity he has to help people who are in trouble, and this test can easily be applied by an individual member to himself. To what

extent is he a glowing flame of benediction among those who are cold in distress ?

This brings me to another aspect of the application of the First Object to every individual member of The Theosophical Society. It is intended, I am perfectly sure, that he should be not only self-minded, not only surroundings-minded, not only faith-minded, not only nation-minded, but no less world-minded. Everything that goes on throughout the world should as far as possible be a matter of concern to every member of The Theosophical Society. The existence of a *nucleus* of the Universal Brotherhood entirely depends upon our recognition of the very existence of a Universal Brotherhood itself, and the more we ignore this Universal Brotherhood, the less potent are we to help to establish a nucleus of it in The Society to which we have the honour to belong.

I hold that it is entirely anti-Theosophical for a member of The Theosophical Society to say that he has no concern with the affairs of nations other than his own, of faiths other than his own, of events other than those which affect him directly. Doubtless, his duty begins with his immediate surroundings. Doubtless, his

application of Theosophy must be to his immediate surroundings. But neither his duty nor his application of Theosophy must stop there; and indeed in these days in which it is being sought to weld the world into a very definite solidarity, every member of The Theosophical Society should be as international as he is national, should be understandingly concerned about all the great Faiths of the world as well as about his own. There should not be a single member of The Theosophical Society in any part of the world who lives isolated in his own immediate surroundings and to all intents and purposes indifferent to what is going on outside the immediate frontiers of his consciousness. Not only should every Theosophist be deeply interested in events taking place beyond the normal extensions of his consciousness, but he should add to this interest a capacity to see the various events in their due proportion one to another, so that he may, however humbly, become an agent of that Law of Adjustment which is forever adjusting the whole world and every part of it out of the less in which it moves into the More which is its immediate destiny. He should do his utmost to know all he can about the major events which are happening everywhere,

and he should try to perceive how each major event may be adjusted to its right fruition.

And he should certainly try to understand how there is an increasing and intimate relationship between all the circumstances of life happening throughout the world, He himself is personally affected by all that takes place everywhere, however remote it may appear from his everyday life.

I have said before that every Theosophist should be world-minded. But must he not be world-emotioned? There is the understanding which knowledge gives, but there is also the understanding which sympathy gives, which goodwill gives, which compassion gives. I do not say that world-mindedness and world-emotion-ness must necessarily result in world-action on the physical plane. But a knowledge of the world and a feeling of the world should surely, in every member of The Theosophical Society, give rise to an exercise of that will which is the very soul of action.

Especially in my capacity as President of The Theosophical Society I feel very

deeply concerned with what is going on in every Section, and with what is going on in every country of every Section. In any case, I must surely feel, especially in these days, particularly concerned with every country in the world, with the peoples of the world, with the experiences through which the world is passing. But I also feel I have a very special intimacy with every country through the Section of The Theosophical Society which I regard as the very heart of the country itself. Not a day passes at Adyar when I am not thinking of one Section or of another. There is not a single Section, there is not a single General Secretary, with regard to whom I am not trying constantly to deepen the channels of our mutual Brotherhood. This is part of my contribution to the strengthening of the nucleus of Universal Brotherhood. It is part of my reverence to The Theosophical Society. And all personality, all difference of opinion, is dissolved in the magic of the Universal Brotherhood to which we all belong. But, of course, my duties also lie outside the actual confines of the organism of The Theosophical Society in the outer world. Where there is no Section, there have I my duty in the name of the nucleus,

Where there are no members, there have I no less my duties to the nucleus.

We members of The Theosophical Society belong to the whole world, even though we may very rightly have our patriotisms, our religious fervours, and our intellectual and other convictions. While The Theosophical Society on the physical plane is a specific organism within definite limitations, on the inner planes The Society covers the whole world, as obviously it must since it is a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood. What we have to realize is that in the Theosophical Society this Universal Brotherhood exists and that we have to make a spot-light of it in the outer world.

For this reason I am particularly anxious that every member should consider himself as involved in what is going on everywhere, and especially that he should consider himself as involved in what is happening in India—the heart of the modern world. In my next Open Letter I shall be referring to India in the words of our great President-Mother herself. I shall be emphasizing the fact on which she laid such constant stress, namely that upon India's regeneration depends in no

small degree the regeneration of the whole world. You all know how she worked unto death for India's freedom, not merely because she loved India so deeply, but even more because she knew (for had she not been told ?) that upon India's freedom depended the regeneration of the world itself. Is it not partly for this reason that the International Headquarters of The Society came to India ? I shall be hoping that you will be indeed receptive to the Indian situation, will constantly be trying to understand it, and will be giving to it your most enlightened will. We who work directly in the service of the Masters are not at all concerned as to where we work. We are eager to go anywhere and do anything. We are eager to fit ourselves for any work that may be given to us, utterly renouncing our own particular personal predilections. It is not because some of us love India so much that we work for her, though it is certainly true that the more we work for India, the more we love her. But it is because we know something of the Plan and its immediate expression, and we know that the world will never be at peace until India has found her rightful place among its nations.

Therefore is it imperative, it seems to me, that every member of The Theosophical Society should specially be India-minded, and should feel deeply for India, even if the privilege has not so far been his to set his feet on her sacred soil. Also should he be Democracy-minded, Freedom-minded, justice-minded, not merely as regards his home but as regards every country in the world. We have passed beyond the stage at which we dare to say that the affairs of other nations, of faiths other than our own, of other people's lives, are not our concern. True indeed, our concern must be reverent, it must be appreciative, and understanding. But it must also be an expression of that World Conscience which to-day is taking shape and form. Every member of The Theosophical Society, as it seems to me, must help it to become as beautiful as possible. And each of us is concerned to make it his business that throughout the world every Conscience of whatever kind is contributing beautifully to the formation of a World Conscience.

Not one of us dare feel that it is not his business what happens in Europe, in Asia, in the Americas, in Africa, in Australasia.

Our consciences ought to have been concerned with Abyssinia. They ought to have been concerned with the situation of China. They ought still to be concerned with these, for a true conscience never forgets, though it remembers only in order to help. Our Consciences should be concerned with what is going on in India, because I believe it is no exaggeration to say that upon the developing situation in India to no small extent depends the safety of the world for peace and happiness.

And I would say to all my Indian fellow-members of our Society that they, in the throes of national reconstruction, have the very special duty of being world-minded. They dare not imagine that they have no concern with enslavements elsewhere, but only with their own. It is very easy in India for the Indian to feel he has no concern whatever with any circumstances outside the national family. Indeed more than one Minister of the Indian National Governments has emphasized that the rest of the world is the concern of the rest of the world, and that India is the concern of Indians. Such an attitude piles up obstacles on India's way, as

in other terms it would pile up obstacles on the way of every country.

The least assault on the Universal Brotherhood of mankind—I should like to add: of all life—must be the concern of every member of The Society, even though his Nation and his Government may still be asleep to their duties. Whatever else is dead, members of The Theosophical Society must be alive.

I need hardly assure my brethren that I am seeking in every possible way to follow in the footsteps, though at a very great distance, of my noble predecessor in the office of President. Where she achieved great results, I can only achieve but very little. But the will is very willing, for I know that once India has rediscovered herself—and she has not yet done this—the world will breathe again.

Every member of The Society must actively honour his acceptance of its First Great Object, and must therefore be as universal as he can in his Brotherhood. The triumph of our First Object depends upon the devotion to it of every member. In our ranks there must be no talk of isolation, of independence. On the other

hand through the medium of every race, of every nation, and of every faith, we must learn to live together, to share together, and to place upon a common altar the glories of our individualities, be these of ourselves, of our nations, of our faiths, of our races.

Georges S. Arundale

